

NSC BRIEFING

6 April 1954

CHINESE COMMUNIST SUPPORT
OF THE VIET MINH

- I. The French Government has told Ambassador Dillon of the extent of Chinese Communist support to the Viet Minh in the Dien Bien Phu fighting.
- II. The French state that there are 14 Chinese Communist technical advisers with Viet Minh HQ and numerous others at division level.
 - A. We consider it quite possible that there are Chinese advisers with Viet Minh operational HQ but it is not a new development.
 - B. We carry 2,000 Chinese Communist advisers with Viet Minh throughout Tonkin at division and lower level.

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

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III. The French also say that a Chinese general named Ly Chen-Hou heads the Chinese staff with the Viet Minh, according to Ambassador Dillon.

A. We have no information on who the person is heading the Chinese advisers, or what his rank is. But we feel it credible that a general is there.

IV. The Paris report says that Chinese have established, are maintaining and operating the telephone lines in use by Viet Minh forces around DienBien Phu.

A. We consider this possible.

B. But in view of other known Chinese Communist materiel support to the Viet Minh, we do not consider this to be particularly significant.

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V. The French report from Paris that 40 37-mm radar-controlled antiaircraft guns, manned by Chinese, are in Dien Bien Phu area.

A. The latest report on this subject

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stated that there were 24 37-mm AA pieces at Dien Bien Phu. It made no mention of radar.

B. We have no information that any of these guns are radar controlled, and feel that if they were, French air losses to these weapons would be greater than they have been. In any case, the use of radar-controlled 37-mm AA has never been reported anywhere.

C. The French have reported earlier that Chinese crews are manning the 37's; this has not been confirmed but is possibly true.

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D. General Cogne said several days ago that he has "... begun to wonder if enemy antiaircraft guns may not be manned by Chinese Communist gunners." He reiterated that he had "no proof of Chinese Communist participation in battle of Dien Bien Phu," and said that "if any proof were forthcoming, it would not long be kept secret."

VI. The French told Ambassador Dillon that the Chinese have supplied 1,000 extra trucks recently, 500 of which have arrived since 1 March and all of which are driven by Chinese.

A. We believe it likely that 1,000 trucks have been recently provided.

B. We have no substantiation that 500 have arrived since 1 March.

C. The Chinese have been driving trucks from the Chinese border into Indochina for many months.

VII. The French report that the Chinese have given substantial material help in guns, and ammunition to the Viet Minh for Dien Bien Phu.

A. The Viet Minh is using substantial numbers 105-mm artillery pieces at Dien Bien Phu for the first time in the war.

B. We think they have about 22/105's at Dien Bien Phu.

C. They are using 37-mm AAA, and this is the first instance of Viet Minh use of this weapon in the war.

- D. The Chinese have made a special effort to supply the Viet Minh in this battle by making available unprecedented amounts of artillery, mortar and small-arms ammunition, and food and medical supplies.

VIII. There are other forms of Chinese aid.

- A. Training of Viet Minh regular troops in China has been taking place since 1951.
- B. Pilot training on piston-engined aircraft has been reported so frequently that it is now accepted.
- C. There have been rumors of naval training on Hainan.